

NJLINCS Health Alert Network
Public Health Update
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Subject: **Immunizations, Vaccines and Public Health**

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Attachments: None

As recovery efforts continue in the Hurricane Sandy affects areas of New Jersey (NJ), questions are being raised regarding the need for immunizations. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), outbreaks of infectious diseases after floods such as we experienced here in NJ are unusual, and there is generally no increased risk of getting vaccine-preventable diseases. Mass immunization clinics are not a standard recommendation. However, since each situation is unique, there may be the need to vaccinate particular individuals involved in clean-up efforts, those providing medical care or displaced individuals living in communal settings for prolonged periods of time. Please keep in mind that it is influenza season and that the influenza vaccine is recommended for all individuals > 6 months of age.

Tetanus Vaccine

The same recommendations that apply to any other time also apply during a flood. Everyone should be immunized with a primary series of tetanus, diphtheria and pertussis-containing vaccine. In accordance with the current CDC guidelines, individuals should receive a tetanus booster if they have not been vaccinated for tetanus during the past 10 years. Td (tetanus/diphtheria) or Tdap (tetanus/diphtheria/pertussis) can be used: getting the Tdap formulation for one tetanus booster during adulthood is recommended to maintain protection against pertussis. The concern with flooding is that clean-up and repairs present an increased risk of injury and tetanus from injuries is preventable by vaccination. Adults who did not receive DTP or DTaP as a child, or whose tetanus vaccination history is unknown should receive a primary series of three doses of tetanus-containing vaccine in accordance with the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) recommended schedule. Please take this opportunity to vaccinate individuals with Tdap to provide protection against pertussis as appropriate. Information about the vaccine schedule is available through the CDC website at <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/schedules/hcp/index.html>

People who sustain a wound should check with their healthcare provider promptly to determine if they need to be vaccinated. The decision will depend on an assessment of

the wound and the individual's past immunization history. Further information regarding wound management is available through the CDC website at <http://www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/disease/tetanus.asp> or the appropriate chapter of Epidemiology and Prevention of Vaccine-Preventable Diseases available at <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/pubs/pinkbook/index.html>

Hepatitis B Vaccine

As always, hepatitis B vaccine is recommended for people who will be providing direct patient care, or who are otherwise expected to have routine contact with the blood and bodily fluids of others. There is no increased risk of hepatitis B during a flood unless unvaccinated volunteers or healthcare workers are involved in high-risk activities.

Hepatitis A Vaccine

There is no recommendation for mass vaccination with hepatitis A during flood events. The virus is not common in the US and is generally not present even in sewage. For persons responding to the disaster, the risk of getting the disease is extremely low, and so the vaccine is not recommended for them.

Obtaining Vaccines

In support of vaccination efforts, the New Jersey Vaccines for Children (VFC) program will make adult formulations of Tdap, hepatitis A and hepatitis B vaccines available through established enrollees in the program. Td is not available as part of this program. Local health departments (LHD) and Federally-Qualified Health Centers (FQHC) enrolled as ADULT PROVIDERS in the VFC program should order through their established mechanisms and note their order as "Hurricane Sandy Vaccinations." Orders should be placed via IMODS but if internet access is not available, orders can be placed by fax or phone. It is critical that you use your Adult Provider PIN to ensure proper funding for this effort is identified. The vaccination of non-VFC eligible children will be discussed on a case-by-case basis. Please contact the NJ VFC program at 609-826-4862 with any questions regarding LHD/FQHC Adult Vaccine eligibility.

Further information is available through the following web sites:

<http://www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/disease/responderimmun.asp>
<http://www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/disease/tetanus.asp>
<http://emergency.cdc.gov/disasters/disease/immunizationqa.asp>
<http://emergency.cdc.gov/disasters/floods/after.asp>